

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) An endoscope suitable for autoclaving comprising:
an elongate flexible tube ~~elastic member~~ having a distal end and a proximal
end; at least part thereof engaged with the surface of the housing of said endoscope under the
atmospheric pressure so that said endoscope will be kept fluid-tight;

a cylindrical elastic member having a distal end and a proximal end and having
an inner space formed to communicate from the distal end to the proximal end, the elastic
member being arranged such that the flexible tube is inserted in the inner space; and

a seal portion provided to seal the inner space at the distal end side of the
elastic member, the seal portion being engaged with a periphery of the flexible tube in order
to keep the flexible tube fluid-tight,

wherein ~~said elastic member includes as at least part thereof a~~ the seal portion
[[that]] separates from at least a portion of the periphery ~~surface~~ of the flexible tube in
response to a housing of said endoscope under predetermined pressure that is oriented from
the inner space side ~~surface~~ of [[said]] the elastic member to release the fluid-tight connection
~~the outer surface thereof.~~

15. (Original) An endoscope according to Claim 14, wherein said
predetermined pressure is pressure lower than pressure released at a decompression step of
autoclaving.

16. (Currently Amended) An endoscope according to claim 14, wherein an
inner diameter, thickness and material of said seal portion are set to values that permit

separation of said seal portion from said ~~surface of said housing~~ at least a portion of the periphery of the flexible tube.

17. (Previously Presented) An endoscope according to claim 14, wherein said seal portion comprises a resin material.

18. (New) An endoscope according to claim 14, wherein a hard member is connected to the flexible tube at the proximal end side thereof, and

the elastic member is arranged such as to cover the connecting portion of the flexible tube and the hard member.